

2.) Applicant submits proposed drawing corrections herewith, responding to the several comments set forth by Examiner in the Final Office Action. It respectfully is requested that these proposed corrections now be approved and that the corrected drawings be accepted for entry into the file wrapper.

3 & 4.) Claims 1, 18, 19 and 27 now have been amended to clarify and respond to Examiner's concerns. Care has been taken to avoid the introduction of any new matter or to raise any new issues and to thus avoid the mutual expense of filing an RCE. It respectfully is submitted that Examiner's rejection of Claims 1-27 under 35.USC.112 as being indefinite is no longer applicable.

5-17.) Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner's several rejections of Claims 1-27 under 35.USC.102 and under 35.USC.103 are incorrect, particularly as these claims now have been amended.

Each of the several rejections include the A-P reference -- cited either alone or in combination with one or more of the other cited patents but none teaches or even suggests the novel and inventive features as now clearly set forth in varying scope in the now amended parent and dependent Claims 1-27.

Specifically, Figure 1 of A-P discloses four plotted curves, two of which curves merely plot the relation between pore diameters and the number of pores for fine media and coarse media, respectively. A third curve plots such relationship when the coarse and fine media are joined. A fourth curve plots a prediction in such relationship. There is neither a teaching or the faintest suggestion whatsoever in A-P of Applicant's novel and now clearly recited arrangement -- wherein factors of layer thicknesses, porosity, fiber and pore sizes are taken into consideration -- let alone, the unique and novel feature wherein these factors are taken into account in a

calculation so that the overall average pore sizes of the combined successive layer thicknesses is smaller than that of the average overall pore sizes of the finest fiber thickness.

Clearly, none of the other cited references teaches or remotely suggests such an optimum efficiency calculation. Even if the teachings of these cited patents were combined with A-I – a combination made in light of Applicant's disclosure – the combination would still fail to anticipate Applicant's claimed invention and would defeat the initial purpose of each of the references. More particularly, the cited Alkire et al '390 – teaches only a needled bi-component glass fiber wool with fibers of irregular shape. The Ahr H 1909 reference teaches an absorbent composition which includes polymeric absorbent gel with cellulosic fibers wrapped around such gel and bonded with a bonding agent. Bodolato '675 teaches layered filter media with each layer having certain specified mean pore size. The Goetz '385 patent teaches cylindrically wrapped layers of filter media with progressively finer materials. Cusick '586 teaches mean fiber diameter layer increases with density decreases. Toni et al '135 teaches fiber density decreases.

Clearly, none of these several cited references lends itself to combination with one or more of the other and all fail to teach or even suggest the unique novel and patentable arrangement now clearly expressed in Applicant's amended Claims 1-27.

For reasons above, it respectfully is submitted that these claims should now be held allowable and that the instant application be passed to issue. Accordingly, the present amendment should now be entered for purposes of such allowance or for purposes of Appeal.

In the event that Examiner persists in its rejection of the claims as amended, it respectfully is requested that Examiner telephone Applicant's attorney at the telephone number below in order to resolve any remaining differences or to arrange for an interview at Examiner's Office, if such an interview is indicated.

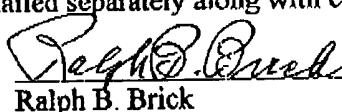
Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATION

I HEREBY CERTIFY that this correspondence is being faxed to Examiner at telephone number: 703-872-9311, with the correspondence being addressed to: Box AF, Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C., 20231, this 27 day of August, 2002. Corrected drawings also are being faxed herewith and will be mailed separately along with copies of red ink changes.



Ralph B. Brick